(b) In the State Public Works Department (PWD) Ministers' Conference held on 12th June, 2000, at New Delhi, formation of a unified authority comprising of Highway Authority, State Police and Transport Departments, for highway patrolling and protection of highway assets, was discussed and was unanimously supported by all State Governments. It was decided to form a Committee under the Chairmanship of Minister of State for the Ministry of Surface Transport, to look into this matter and make suitable recommendations.

(c) No, Sir. The existing condition of Jaipur and Dausa Section of National Highway No. 11 is good and it is not an accident prone zone.

**Funds for Repair of National Highways**

1046. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has cleared a proposal for designating another 30 roads in various States as National Highways, aggregating a length of 5,724 km. so that they can be speedily developed;

(b) if so, name of the States which will be benefited;

(c) whether Government have also set apart certain funds for repairs of National Highways which are in bad shape; and

(d) by when the goal to achieve a National Highway Grid of 100 km. density possible so that no part of the country is more than 50 kms. away from a National Highway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The proposal to declare certain state roads as National Highway is at initial stage and hence no details can be given.

(c) Yes, Sir. Efforts are made to maintain the entire National Highway network in traffic worthy condition within the available resources.

(d) Expansion of National Highway network is a continuous process and the goal to have a 100 km. grid of National Highway is

to be achieved in a phased manner depending on the overall availability of resources.

**Cargo transfer system at Vishakhapatnam Port**

1047. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an increase in container traffic at the Vishakhapatnam port;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures taken to modernise and introduce sophisticated cargo transfer system for containers in that Port?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The details of container traffic handled through Visakhapatnam Port during the last five years and the growth rates achieved are as under:—

| Year | TEU's Handled | Growth Rate | Tonnage Handled | Growth Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995-96 | 8446 | — | 93693 | — |
| 1996-9? | 13117 | (+) 55% | 166294 | (+) 77% |
| 1997-98 | 12608 | (-) 38% | 146005 | (-) 12% |
| 1998-99 | 14307 | (+) 3.48% | 172081 | (+) 18% |
| 1999-00 | 20427 | (+) 42.80% | 262356 | (+) 52% |

(c) A separate berth for containers has been commissioned on 3.7.2000. The length of the berth is being expanded to 449 mtrs. and draft is also proposed to be increased to 16 mtrs. Modern equipment at this berth are to be installed through private sector. A Container Freight Station and additional storage area are to be developed. The container berth connectivity through road and rail connection is planned in the future. Other required infrastructure facilities and equipment and stuffing and destuffing facilities are also planned.